

REMARKS

This Response addresses the issues raised by the Examiner in the Office Action mailed October 6, 2003. Initially, Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for the careful consideration given this case. Currently, Claims 1 to 20 are pending and stand rejected by the Examiner. Claims 1-5, 7-8, 14-15 and 20 have been cancelled without prejudice. In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, Applicants feel that all outstanding issues have been addressed and prompt allowance of the remaining claims is respectfully requested.

§ 102 Rejections

The Examiner rejected Claims 1- 5 and 13-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e), as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,457,004 to Nishioka et al. ("Nishioka"). The Examiner initially noted that Nishioka has a common assignee with the instant application and that the above § 102(e) rejection may be overcome either by showing under 37 CFR 1.132 that any invention disclosed but not claimed in the reference was derived from the inventor of this application and is thus not an invention "by another," or by an appropriate showing under 37 CFR 1.131. While Applicants make note of the Examiner's suggestions, because Nishioka is distinct from the present invention, Applicants have chosen to amend the claims herein in order to more particularly distinguish over Nishioka.

Substantively, the Examiner noted with respect to Claim 1 that Nishioka discloses a document information display means for displaying document identification information received as the results of an initial search. Further, the Examiner held that Nishioka discloses a means for selecting at least a portion of the contents of a document identified by the document identification information displayed by the document information display means. This, and the rest of the Examiner's discussion of other claim elements does not address the specific claimed features of the present invention.

In contrast to the teachings of Nishioka, Fig. 9 of the present application generally shows the claimed invention. Fig. 9 includes a display area for modifying and confirming a Boolean expression based upon a search type of a keyword-search-type database (Claims 6, 13 and 20). As described in the specification, some keyword-search-type databases accept all Boolean expressions while other databases may accept only AND or OR expressions (page 26, lines 3-5). In the example of Fig. 9, a keyword-search-type database E accepts only an

AND search and a keyword-search-type database F accepts other common Boolean expressions as well (page 33, lines 1-8). Thus, in a keyword-search-type database, the search system has certain restrictions. By allowing for the modification and confirmation of a Boolean expression in accordance with a search type of a keyword-search-type database, the present invention expands the utility and efficiency of prior art search engines. With the present claimed invention, a search which more closely tracks the demands of the user can be performed, even when the search engines include certain restrictions (e.g., on the types of Boolean expressions that may be used).

In order to more distinctly point out this feature (as shown in Fig. 9 and described in the accompanying description), Applicants have cancelled Claims 1-5 and have rewritten Claim 6 largely as a combination of the elements found in original Claims 6, 7 and 8 (original Claims 7 and 8 being cancelled herein). Likewise, amended Claim 16 incorporates claimed elements from original Claims 16 and 20 (original Claim 20 being cancelled herein). Each of these claims specifically recite a means for modifying and confirming a boolean expression that associates a plurality of words included in a first query (or a method thereof). This feature expands the use of the search engine by maximizing the use of various types of search databases. This feature/function is not shown in the prior art of record.

Specifically, Nishioka depicts a search system used to search both keyword-type and associative-type databases (Figure 6). In Nishioka, the display has an area for displaying topic words P2 (Figure 6). However, Nishioka does not disclose any means to modify a Boolean expression created by the search server. Moreover, Nishioka does not show a means for modifying and/or confirming a Boolean expression based on a search type of the keyword-search-type database(s).

In addition, Figures 3 and 6 in Nishioka depict a query input window E1 (analogous to Fig. 9). However, E1 is a simple window to input a query to be searched, and E1 is not a part to modify a Boolean expression created by the search server. Nothing in these figures depicts the claimed invention, as detailed above.

§ 103 Rejections

The Examiner rejected Claims 6, 7, and 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,987,460 to Niwa et al. ("Niwa"). The Examiner also rejected Claims 8-11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Niwa in view of

U.S. Patent No. 5,826,261 to Spencer ("Spencer"). These additional references add nothing related to the modification/confirmation of a Boolean expression as recited in the amended claims.

Specifically, Niwa discloses a search system which depicts a graph using a topic word as a node in an area for displaying a topic-word (Figures 5 and 8). Likewise, Spencer discloses a search system to search a plurality of databases (Figure 1, *et seq.*). However, Niwa and Spencer do not disclose modifying a Boolean expression created by the search server. Moreover, Niwa and Spencer do not show modifying and confirming a Boolean expression based on a search type of the keyword-search-type databases.

The above amendments and accompanying remarks address each and every issue raised by the Examiner in the Office Action. Based on these clarifying amendments, Applicants believe that all claims of the present invention are now in condition for final allowance. As outlined above, each of these amendments is fully supported throughout the specification, and no new matter is introduced by these amendments. If the Examiner feels that any issues remain outstanding, the Examiner is encouraged to contact Applicant's attorney at the contact information below

Respectfully submitted,

Stanley P. Fisher
Registration Number 24,344



Juan Carlos A. Marquez
Registration Number 34,072

REED SMITH LLP
3110 Fairview Park Drive, Suite 1400
Falls Church, Virginia 22042
(703) 641-4200
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